

Message Text

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SLBJECT: CCMS: REVISED OIL SPILLS RESOLUTION

FOLLOWING IS REQUESTED SUMMARY OF CCMS/IMCO ACTIONS AGAINST
OIL SPILLS PREPARED FOR USE OF POST INFORMATION OFFICER BY
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD.

BEGIN TEXT.

MARITIME NATIONS HAVE LONG BEEN AWARE OF THE PROBLEMS
STEMMING FROM OCEAN OIL POLLUTION, AND HAVE, AT LEAST SINCE
THE 1950'S, ACTED THROUGH VARIOUS UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MARITIME CON-
SULTATIVE ORGANIZATION (IMCO), TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEM.
IN ADDITION TO ITS BIENNIAL ASSEMBLIES, IMCO WAS FIRST
ORGANIZED INTO A COUNCIL AND A MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE,
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WHICH DEAL WITH BOTH POLICY AND TECHNICAL MATTERS RELATING

TO OCEAN SHIPPING, INCLUDING MARINE POLLUTION. THUS IMCO IS CONCERNED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1954 CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF POLLUTION OF THE SEA BY OIL, THE 1969 AND 1971 AMENDMENTS WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN AND ACCELERATE INTERNATIONAL ACTION TO PREVENT OCEAN OIL DISCHARGES FROM SHIPS. THESE MEASURES ARE TYPICAL OF A SERIES OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS, DEVELOPED SINCE 1969

UNDER THE AUSPICES OF IMCO DESIGNED TO CONSTITUTE A COMPREHENSIVE SCHEME FOR INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF MARITIME SOURCES OF OCEAN POLLUTION. IT IS UNFORTUNATE THAT EFFORTS BY COUNTRIES TO RATIFY THESE AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN SLOW AT BEST.

APART FROM THE OCCASIONAL SPECTACULAR INCIDENTS OF OIL SPILLAGE SUCH AS THE TORREY CANYON DISASTER AND OTHERS, IT WAS RECOGNIZED THAT THERE ARE SHIPBOARD TECHNICAL AND OPERATIONAL FACTORS WHICH ARE THE DIRECT CAUSE OF A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF OCEAN OIL POLLUTION. SINCE THE PROBLEM IS OF WORLD-WIDE PROPORTIONS, IT EVENTUALLY REQUIRES A SOLUTION WHICH MIGHT BEST BE FACILITATED THROUGH THE UN AND ITS AFFILIATED AGENCIES. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THE WORLD'S TANKER FLEET IS CONTROLLED BY NATO NATIONS, THE NORTH ATLANTIC ALLIANCE DECIDED IT COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HELPING TO SOLVE THE POLLUTION PREVENTION PROBLEM BY ACTING AS A CATALYST TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT ACTION EITHER DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY THROUGH INTERNATIONAL BODIES ACTIVE IN THE FIELD.

IT WAS WITH THIS BACKGROUND THAT ONE OF THE FIRST PILOT STUDIES LAUNCHED BY NATO'S COMMITTEE ON CHALLENGES OF MODERN SOCIETY (CCMS), AFTER IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1969, WAS CONCERNED WITH COASTAL WATER POLLUTION. UNDER THE AEGIS OF CCMS, BELGIUM CONVENED AN OIL SPILL CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS IN NOVEMBER OF 1970; STEMMING FROM THIS CONFERENCE WERE FOUR RESOLUTIONS AND A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING OCEAN OIL POLLUTION. THE PRINCIPAL RESOLUTION, ADOPTED BY THE NATO NATIONS "TO ACHIEVE BY 1975 IF POSSIBLE, BUT NOT LATER THAN THE END OF THE DECADE, THE ELIMINATION OF INTENTIONAL DISCHARGES OF OIL AND OILY WASTES INTO THE SEA." THEY ALSO RESOLVED TO SEEK EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1969

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AMENDMENTS AND TO WORK URGENTLY ON PROGRAMS TO MINIMIZE THE RISK AND CONSEQUENCES OF ACCIDENTAL SPILLS. THIS RESOLUTION AS WELL AS THREE OTHERS DEALING WITH SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGICAL COUNTER-MEASURES AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN COUNTERING OIL POLLUTION DAMAGE, DEPENDED ON ACTION AT TWO LEVELS. FIRST, THE NATO NATIONS PLEDGED THEMSELVES TO NATIONAL ACTION AND SECONDLY, PLEDGED THAT STEPS BE TAKEN IN INTERNATIONAL FORA, PARTICULARLY IMCO, TO PRESS

FOR SPEEDIER AND MORE EFFECTIVE ACTION. ANNUAL REPORTS BY THE FOURTEEN ALLIANCE NATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS CCMS PILOT PROJECT, INDICATE A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF ACTION, BOTH NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, ESPECIALLY THROUGH IMCO, TO IMPLEMENT THE CCMS OIL SPILLS RESOLUTION OF 1970.

IN THE FALL OF 1973, OFFICIAL DELEGATIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES AND SEVENTY OTHER NATIONS MET IN LONDON UNDER THE

AUSPICES OF IMCO, TO NEGOTIATE A NEW INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION OF POLLUTION FROM SHIPS, 1973. THIS CONVENTION, WHEN IT ENTERS INTO FORCE, WILL SUPERSEDE THE 1954 CONVENTION, AND WILL REGULATE OIL AND HARMFUL SUBSTANCES OTHER THAN OIL, INCLUDING NOXIOUS CHEMICALS, SEWAGE AND GARBAGE. IT BROADLY ADDRESSES THE PROBLEM OF PREVENTION OF POLLUTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT BY SHIPS AND CONTAINS TECHNICAL REGULATIONS INCLUDING BOTH OPERATIONAL DISCHARGE STANDARDS AND DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS FOR TANKERS AND OTHER VESSELS. THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MARINE POLLUTION (LONDON, OCTOBER 1973) AT WHICH THE NEW CONVENTION WAS NEGOTIATED WAS VERY SIMILAR TO THAT ADOPTED BY THE NATO MINISTERS IN DECEMBER 1970, "THE ACHIEVEMENT BY 1975, IF POSSIBLE, BUT CERTAINLY BY THE END OF THE DECADE, OF THE COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF THE WILLFUL AND INTENTIONAL POLLUTION OF THE SEA BY OIL AND NOXIOUS SUBSTANCES OTHER THAN OIL, AND THE MINIMIZATION OF ACCIDENTAL SPILLS. ..." THE 1973 CONVENTION SUBSTANTIALLY FULFILLS THIS OBJECTIVE, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO OPERATIONAL DISCHARGES FROM SHIPS.

PRIOR TO THE 1973 MARINE POLLUTION CONFERENCE, THE US PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW MARINE ENVIRONMENT PRO-
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TECTION COMMITTEE IN IMCO. AS PROPOSED, THE NEW COMMITTEE WOULD UNDERTAKE ALL WORK OF THE ORGANIZATION RELATING TO THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF POLLUTION OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT. THE IMCO COUNCIL SUBSEQUENTLY ENDORSED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MEPC AND THE IMCO ASSEMBLY ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING MEPC AS A PERMANENT SUBSIDIARY BODY. MEPC IS A TECHNICAL COMMITTEE SPECIFICALLY ASSIGNED, "TO ASSIST IMCO IN ITS CONSULTATIONS WITH OTHER BODIES WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM, ESPECIALLY THE UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME, AND WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERT BODIES IN THE FIELD OF MARINE POLLUTION, AND TO COORDINATE AND ADMINISTER, IN CONSULTATION AS APPROPRIATE WITH OTHER BODIES OF IMCO, THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ORGANIZATION CONCERNING THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF MARINE POLLUTION FROM SHIPS. ..."

THUS, IT CAN BE SEEN THAT THE UNITED STATES, IN ADDITION TO ADOPTING STRONG NATIONAL POLLUTION CONTROL MEASURES, STRONGLY SUPPORTS AND IS WORKING WITHIN IMCO AND THE JOINT GROUP OF EXPERTS ON THE SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS OF MARINE POLLUTION (GESAMP) TOWARD A GOAL OF ELIMINATING INTENTIONAL POLLUTION OF THE SEAS, NOT ONLY BY OIL, BUT ALSO BY OTHER HARMFUL SUBSTANCES, AND TOWARD THE MINIMIZING OF ACCIDENTAL SPILLS. THIS WORK FULLY ENCOMPASSES THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF

THE 1970 CCMS COLLOQUIUM ON OIL SPILLS. WHILE CCMS HAS LARGELY FULFILLED ITS ORIGINAL 1970 MISSION AS CATALYST TO ACTION, IT SHOULD MAINTAIN ONGOING INTEREST IN CERTAIN AREAS OF THE OIL POLLUTION PROBLEM, NOTABLY, BY ADOPTING A PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTION TO ADDRESS PROBLEM AREAS THAT DUE TO A HEAVY WORK LOAD WOULD NOT BE ADDRESSED BY IMCO (OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES) IN A MEANINGFUL WAY FOR A CONSIDERABLE TIME, OR WHICH ARE OUTSIDE OF THE IMCO MANDATE FOR POLLUTION WORK. THESE MATTERS ARE CHIEFLY THOSE IDENTIFIED IN THE 1970 CCMS RESOLUTION AS THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS, BOTH OF WHICH WOULD BENEFIT FROM ACTIVE EXPERT-TO-EXPERT TECHNICAL EXCHANGE.

ACCORDINGLY, AT THE APRIL CCMS PLENARY, BELGIUM, LEAD COUNTRY FOR THIS PILOT PROJECT, WILL SUBMIT A DRAFT RESOLUTION WHICH WILL PROPOSE, FOR CONSIDERATION OF CCMS, AN UNCLASSIFIED

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INTENSIFIED INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROGRAM. THE US SUPPORTS SUCH A PROGRAM AND FURTHER, WILL ENCOURAGE AN EXCHANGE OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR TO YEAR AND A HALF TO EXAMINE THE STATE-OF-THE-ART IN THE POLLUTION TECHNOLOGICAL FIELD.

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF THE UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, PARTICULARLY IMCO, IN OCEAN POLLUTION CONTROL, CCMS NOW HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADJUST ITS COURSE OF ACTION TO TAKE FULLEST ADVANTAGE OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENERGIZE AND COORDINATE THE NATIONAL WORK PROGRAMS OF THE ALLIANCE NATIONS TO ADDRESS SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGICAL/SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM AREAS IN A MORE TIMELY FASHION. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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